La continuità dell'essere

Tra Charles S. Peirce e Tu Weiming

Valerio Marconi
(Università degli Studi di Urbino Carlo Bo)
Padova, 4 febbraio 2025

Quanto è interculturale Peirce?

- There are too many types of speech to allow the insertion here of illustrations of all the different ways in which one and the same fact is thought by different peoples. Sufficient has been said to show the **danger of assuming that because a certain way of thinking is natural to us Aryans, therefore, in the absence of any more positive evidence than that no other way occurs to us, it is a law of the human mind that man must think in that way**. Still more presumptuous would it be to assume on those grounds that a given form of thought belongs to every intelligent being (EP2: 18).
- [T]he supreme commandment of the **Buddhisto-Christian** religion is, to generalize, to complete the whole system even until continuity results and the distinct individuals weld together. Thus it is, that while reasoning and the science of reasoning strenuously proclaim the subordination of reasoning to sentiment, the very supreme commandment of sentiment is that man should generalize, or what the logic of relatives shows to be the same thing, should become welded into the universal continuum, which is what true reasoning consists in (CP 1.673 in Brier 2017).

«I 'left' as a christian, I 'found' myself a hindu, and I 'return' a buddhist, **without having ceased to be a christian**.» (Panikkar 1999: 42).

Cosa è già stato fatto

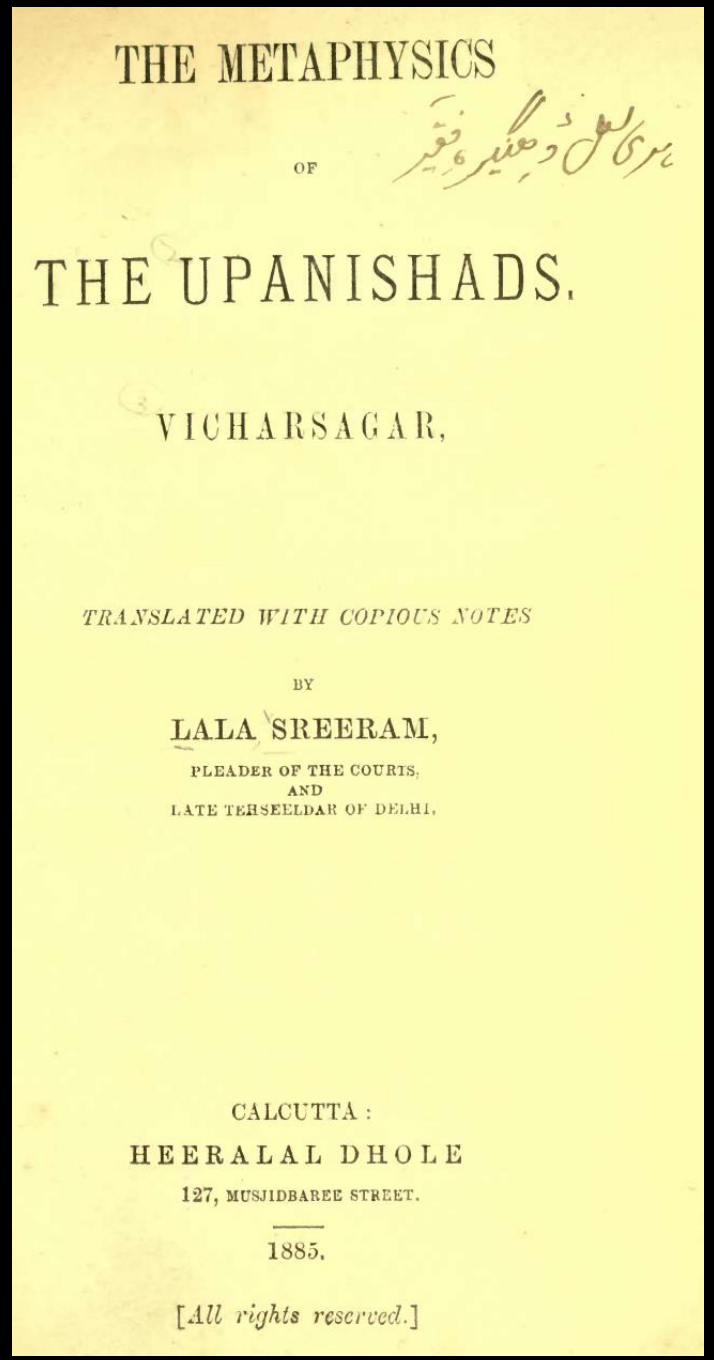
- Si è lavorato sull'affinità fra il pragmatismo di Peirce, in quanto fondato sulla e inclusivo della teoria dei segni, e la ritualità confuciana nell'ambito della filosofia della cultura dei 'confuciani' di Boston (Neville 2000), nonché a una teoria fallibilista e confuciana dell'armonia (Neville 2018).
- Si è già parlato genericamente di incontro in Peirce fra scienza occidentale e «ontologia» orientale del vuoto (Brier 2017).
- Comparazione con Confucio (Foust 2017).
- Recentemente, è stata colta l'affinità del sé peirciano con gli *human becomings* di Roger Ames e Henry Rosemont (Morgan 2020) e, più plausibile, con l'interpretazione del sé confuciano in Tu Weiming (Untea 2022). Nell'ultimo lavoro non sono stati approfonditi gli aspetti cosmologici della questione…

Cosa vorrei fare

- Avanzare una lettura filosofica dello *Zhongyong* che sintonizzi il continuismo di Peirce con la continuità dell'essere di Tu.
- Tu è un riferimento plausibile perché vuole armonizzare la centralità della soggettività con quella delle relazioni parlando della persona umana come di un centro di relazioni.
- A lungo andare, vorrei parlare tanto della persona quanto della comunità in termini di **soggetto dialogale**, nel doppio senso di **protagonista del dialogo** e di **argomento del dialogo** stesso.
- Qui vorrei pensare una cosa astratta come l'autoconsapevolezza in termini concreti come il **dialogo fra sé e sé**, espressione felicemente vaga, e la *self-watchfulness* (Gacka 2021: 132-133).

Synechism e *Advaita*

In particular, the synechist will not admit that physical and psychical phenomena are entirely distinct,—whether as belonging to different categories of substance, or as entirely separate sides of one shield,—but will insist that all phenomena are of one character, though some are more mental and spontaneous, others more material and regular. Still, all alike present that mixture of freedom and constraint, which allows them to be, nay, makes them to be teleological, or purposive. Nor must any synechist say, "I am altogether myself, and not at all you." If you embrace synechism, you must abjure this metaphysics of wickedness. In the first place, your neighbors are, in a measure, yourself, and in far greater measure than, without deep studies in psychology, you would believe. Really, the selfhood you like to attribute to yourself is, for the most part, the vulgarest delusion of vanity. In the second place, all men who resemble you and are in analogous circumstances are, in a measure, yourself, though not quite in the same way in which your neighbors are you. There is still another direction in which the barbaric conception of personal identity must be broadened. A Brahmanical hymn begins as follows: "I am that pure and infinite Self, who am bliss, eternal, manifest, all-pervading, and who am the substrate of all that owns name and form." This expresses more than humiliation,—the utter swallowing up of the poor individual self in the spirit of prayer. All communication from mind to mind is through continuity of being. A man is capable of having assigned to him a *rôle* in the drama of creation; and so far as he loses himself in that *rôle*,—no matter how humble it may be,—so far he identifies himself with its Author (EP2: 2-3).



THE METAPHYSICS

OF

THE UPANISHADS.

VICHARSAGAR,

TRANSLATED WITH COPIOUS NOTES

BY

LALA SREERAM,

PLEADER OF THE COURTS,
AND
LATE TEHSEELDAR OF DELHI.

CALCUTTA:
HEERALAL DHOLE
127, MUSJIDBAREE STREET.

1885.

[*All rights reserved.*]

Continuity of being (background)

- Mou Zongsan (1909-1995) ha formulato l'interpretazione del confucianesimo in termini di enfasi sul soggetto e la sua autoconsapevolezza morale, nel senso di *self-watchfulness/vigilance* (trad. di Clower in Mou 2014 e di Su in Mou 2015)/essere «vigile su se stesso» (trad. di Lippiello, *La costante pratica del giusto mezzo. Zhongyong*, p. 45), e di metafisica morale sottesa alla lettura dello *Zhongyong* proposta da Tu (Mou 2015: lezione 4). A differenza di Tu, Mou non considera il confucianesimo una religione.
- Mou insiste, molto più di Tu, sulla natura solitaria della vigilanza:

- Mou parla, infatti, di un *conoscere solitario* (獨 知) morale. Eppure, «it is not limited by our individuality» (Mou 2014: 132) e divenire saggi significa «being necessarily one with heaven and earth and the myriad things» (Mou 2014: 134-135, cf. *Zhongyong* XXII e Tu 2024: 154). Nella pratica della conoscenza morale la soggettività soggettiva o psicologica si eleva alla soggettività oggettiva del saggio per accedere alla realtà morale assoluta come unità di natura umana, Terra, Cielo e diecimila cose. Mou, come Tang Junyi (1964, *The Individual and the World in Chinese Methodology*, Philosophy East and West, 14 (3/4): 293-310), sembra focalizzare il discorso sul rapporto fra individuo e mondo senza passare per la comunità.
- Tu, già nella lezione del 2018 al XXIV congresso mondiale di filosofia, aggiunge la comunità all'unità del sé con Cielo, Terra e le diecimila cose nel proprio umanesimo spirituale (cf. Fang 1973: 24-25).

- Fang Dongmei, pur non essendo in buoni rapporti con Mou e sostenendo una valutazione storico-teoretica contrapposta del neoconfucianesimo, sottoscrive con le proprie parole l'idea di una metafisica morale: «Nature is permeated with life. Nature is charged with value» (Fang 1957: 31). L'umanesimo spirituale di Tu farà scelte lessicali molto simili.

- Peirce scrisse qualcosa di molto simile a Fang: «Generalization, the spilling out of continuous systems, in thought, in sentiment, in deed, is the true end of life » (Peirce 1992: 163, vedi anche CP 1.673). Infatti, anche per Peirce la natura è viva: «as for the cosmos, only so far as it yet is mind, and so has life, is it capable of further evolution» (1893: 178). Peirce parla persino di armonia in maniera simile a Fang:

- «The movement of love is circular, at one and the same impulse projecting creations into independency and drawing them into harmony» (Peirce 1893: 177);
- «Nature is a continuous process of creation and Men are concreators within the realm of Nature. Nature and human nature are two in one, giving form to what I have called the comprehensive harmony, a harmony between ingrowing parts as well as a harmony with surroundings. In this form of primordial unity, all that seems various and antipathetic is so intrinsically related that it strikes together sympathetic chords to the accompaniment of a song of love, which is an encomium of life» (Fang 1957: 23).

Continuity of being (foreground)

- Una lettura di Zhang Zai (1020-1077):

The opening lines in Chang Tsai's *Western Inscription* are not only his article of faith but also his ontological view of the human:

Heaven is my father and earth is my mother, and even such a small being as I finds an intimate place in their midst. Therefore, that which fills the universe I regard as my body and that which directs the universe I regard as my nature. All people are my brothers and sisters, and all things are my companions (Tu 1985: 42-43).

- Continuità dell'essere:

We can embody the whole universe in our sensitivity because we have enlarged and deepened our feeling and care to the fullest extent. […] Selfish desires are forms of self-centeredness that belittle the authentic human capacity to take part in the transformative process of heaven and earth. […] The mind forms a union with nature by extending itself metonymically. Its aesthetic appreciation of nature is neither an appropriation of the object by the subject nor an imposition of the subject on the object, but the merging of the self into an expanded reality through transformation and participation (Tu 1985: 46-47).

Spiritual humanism

- È in questa proposta che l'inclusione della comunità, già presente in Zhang Zai, prende il sopravvento.
- La continuità dell'essere acquisisce verticalità:

The faith in the continuity, indeed the consanguinity, of all modalities of being in making the human an integral part of our existence is cosmological as well as anthropological. It has the great ecological implication of making the earth our proper home. The "continuity of being" in a deeper sense is not merely a horizontal idea. The emergences of life and consciousness strictly speaking are not "ruptures," but they strongly indicate profound transformations evoking a sense of transcendence, at least self-transcendence. This symbolizes that the evolutionary process also entails a vertical trajectory. The sensitivity of the heart has depth as well as breadth. Its all-embracing holism is an inherent human capacity. Therefore, the original heart, rather than the consciousness and feelings we share with animals and the life we share with plants and grass, is distinctively human (Tu 2018: 19).

- Non contravviene al continuismo di Peirce:

How do we envision harmony in diversity in a differentiated and interconnected community? I would like to offer Spiritual Humanism as a response. From this perspective, humanity is differentiated from and simultaneously interconnected with all modalities of being in the universe. It is unique but inseparable from everything else (Tu 2018: 28).

- Anzi, nonostante l'enfasi sul soggetto, i ruoli sociali sono parti integranti della persona:

Implicit in the idea of the self as a center of relationships is subjectivity. It is critical that we do not reduce the center to relationships. A concrete living person is made of a multidimensional complex of relationships. Putting them all together, they cannot fully constitute the person. We should also take into consideration all the primordial ties (race, gender, language, age, and so forth). Neither can the center of the self be established by them. They are all relevant and significant. Each of them is both a constraint and an enabler. They are all enabling constraints (Tu 2018: 7).

- Con Peirce, però, possiamo provare a pensare il centro come a sua volta relazionale senza decentralo e recuperando il dettato di un classico confuciano…

The fact that we are all fated to be a particular person should be accepted, and fully acknowledged. It may not be a blessing, but it calls for positive recognition and even celebration. The perceived constraints are at the same time vehicles or instruments for self-realization. Therefore, they are not simply constraints but enablers as well. In fact, it is these enabling constraints that make us concrete living persons. Confucian self-cultivation is a matter of substantially transforming constraints into enablers through personal effort (Tu 2018: 7).

- È passando dal centro (中) che è possibile la liberazione nei ruoli anzichè dai ruoli…

Vigilance e *Self-watchfulness*

- Tu insiste su *awareness* e *self-awareness*, soprattutto per testimoniare a favore della centralità della soggettività nella propria lettura del confucianesimo.
- C'è un modo di dire la stessa cosa più vicino al dettato classico dello *Zhongyong*: «the superior man is watchful over himself [慎 其, lett. ''agire con cura/essere cauto + suo''], when he is alone» (I: 3, traduce così anche W.-T. Chan). 慎 ha il radicale del cuore, suggerendo un atteggiamento interiore. Il significato concreto è dato dal paragone con l'arciere: «The Master said, ' In archery we have something like the way of the superior man. When the archer misses the centre of the target, he turns round and seeks for the cause of his faliure in himself.'» (XIV: 5). Mou e Tu sono accomunati dal riferimento a Wang Yangming nel trattare questa idea di sé morale.

Basiamoci sul capitolo XIV:

1. The superior man does what is proper to the situation in which he is; he does not desire to go beyond this.

2. In a position of wealth and honour, he does what is proper to a position of wealth and honour. In a poor and low position, he does what is proper to a poor and low position. Situated among barbarous tribes, he does what is proper among barbarous tribes. In a position of sorrow and difficulty, he does what is proper to a position of sorrow and difficulty. The superior man can find himself in no situation in which he is not himself.

3. In a high situation, he does not treat with contempt his inferiors. In a low situation, he does not court the favour of his superiors. He rectifies himself, and seeks for nothing from others, so that he has no dissatisfactions. He does not murmur against Heaven, nor grumble against men.

4. Thus it is that the superior man is quiet and calm, waiting for the appointments *of Heaven* [cf. "so far as he loses himself in that *role* ... so far he identifies himself with its Author " (EP2: 3)], while the mean man walks in dangerous paths, looking for lucky occurrences.

- Il sé peirciano vuole persuadersi (convincere il proprio sé futuro), l'uomo esemplare confuciano deve sorvegliarsi (vegliare su se stesso). Persuadere e sorvegliare sono forme del controllo, **la liberazione o autonomia personale emerge dal controllo del sé sul sé ma perché il controllo sia reale la persona deve già essere una comunità** e non la comunità o confondersi con essa, dev'essere una comunità in continuità d'essere con la comunità. L'esito non è un sé già dato, ma un sé che permane mutando o che muta permanendo nello stato d'equilibro o centratezza (中).

Letture

- Brier, S. 2017. *How Peircean Semiotic Philosophy Connects Western Science with Eastern Emptiness Ontology*. Progress in Biophysics & Molecular Biology, 131: 377-386.
- Chan, N.S. 2011. *The Thought of Mou Zongsan*, Leiden-Boston: Brill.
- Fabbrichesi, R. 2010. *The Body of the Community. Peirce, Royce, and Nietzsche*. European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy, 2 (1).
- Fang, D. (Thomé H.)

1957. *The Chinese View of Life: The Philosophy of Comprehensive Harmony*, Hong Kong: The Union Press.
1973. *A Philosophical Glimpse of Man and Nature in Chinese Culture*. Journal of Chinese Philosophy, 1 (1): 3-26.

- Foust, M.A. 2017. *Confucianism and American Philosophy*, Albany: SUNY
- Gacka, B. 2021. *On the Notion of Person in Confucianism*. Poznańskie Studia Teologiczne, 39: 127-141.
- Morgan, J. 2020. *The Human Person in Confucianism: Triadic Relationships and the Possibilities of an Agapastic Semeiotic Pragmatism*. Dao, 19 (4): 509-533.
- Mou, Z.

2014. *Confucian Moral Metaphysics*. In: J. Clower (ed.), *Late Works of Mou Zongsan. Selected Essays on Chinese Philosophy*, Leiden-Boston: Brill, pp. 125-144. Trans. by J. Clower from the Chinese (牟宗三 2003 [1975]. 儒家的道德的形上學. In: 牟宗三, 牟宗三先生全集, Taipei: Lianjing, pp. 209-221).
2015. *Nineteen Lectures on Chinese Philosophy: A Brief Outline of Chinese Philosophy and the Issues It Entails*, Leipzig: Foundation for the Study of Chinese Philosophy and Culture. Trans. by E.C. Su from the Chinese (牟宗三 1983. *中國哲學十九講*, Taipei: Xuesheng).

- Neville, R.C.

2000. *Boston Confucianism*, Albany: SUNY.
2018. *Peirce and Confucianism on the Fallibility of Immediate Aesthetic Intuition: Charles S. Peirce Society 2018 Presidential Address*. Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society, 54 (1): 1-8.

- Panikkar, R. 1999. *The Intra-Religious Dialogue*. Revised edition, Mahwah: Paulist Press.
- Peirce, C.S.

1893. *EVOLUTIONARY LOVE*. The Monist, 3 (2), 176–200.
1992. *Reasoning and the Logic of Things: The Cambridge Conference Lectures of 1898*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
EP2 = 1998. *The Essential Peirce. Selected Philosophical Writings: Volume 2 (1893-1913)*, Indianapolis-Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

- Tu, W.

1985. *Confucian Thought: Selfhood As Creative Transformation*, Albany: SUNY.
2018. *Spiritual Humanism: Self, Community, Earth, and Heaven*. Wang Yangming Lecture at the 24° World Congress of Philosophy, online: 20210513105139108119.pdf (28/01/2025).
2024. *Spiritual Humanism: Self, Community, Earth, and Heaven*. Diogenes, 65 (2): 145-161.

- Untea, I. 2022. *Peircean and Confucian Interpretations of Self-Development: Semiotic, Normative, and Aesthetic Aspects*. Philosophy East and West, 72 (1): 188-209.
- Wan, S. 2008. *The Viability of Confucian Transcendence: Grappling with TU Weiming's Interpretation of the* Zhongyong. Dao 7 (4): 407–421.
- *Zhongyong*. In: Legge, J. 1960. *The Chinese Classics. Confucian Analects – The Great Learning – The Doctrine of the Mean*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, pp. 382-434. Or. published in 1872.